

Redemption only in instant justice. Kin of rape victims impatient after Hyderabad shooting

Following the incident of Hyderabad shooting, kin of several victims of similar cases demanded 'instant justice', as meted out to the accused in the Telangana rape-murder case.

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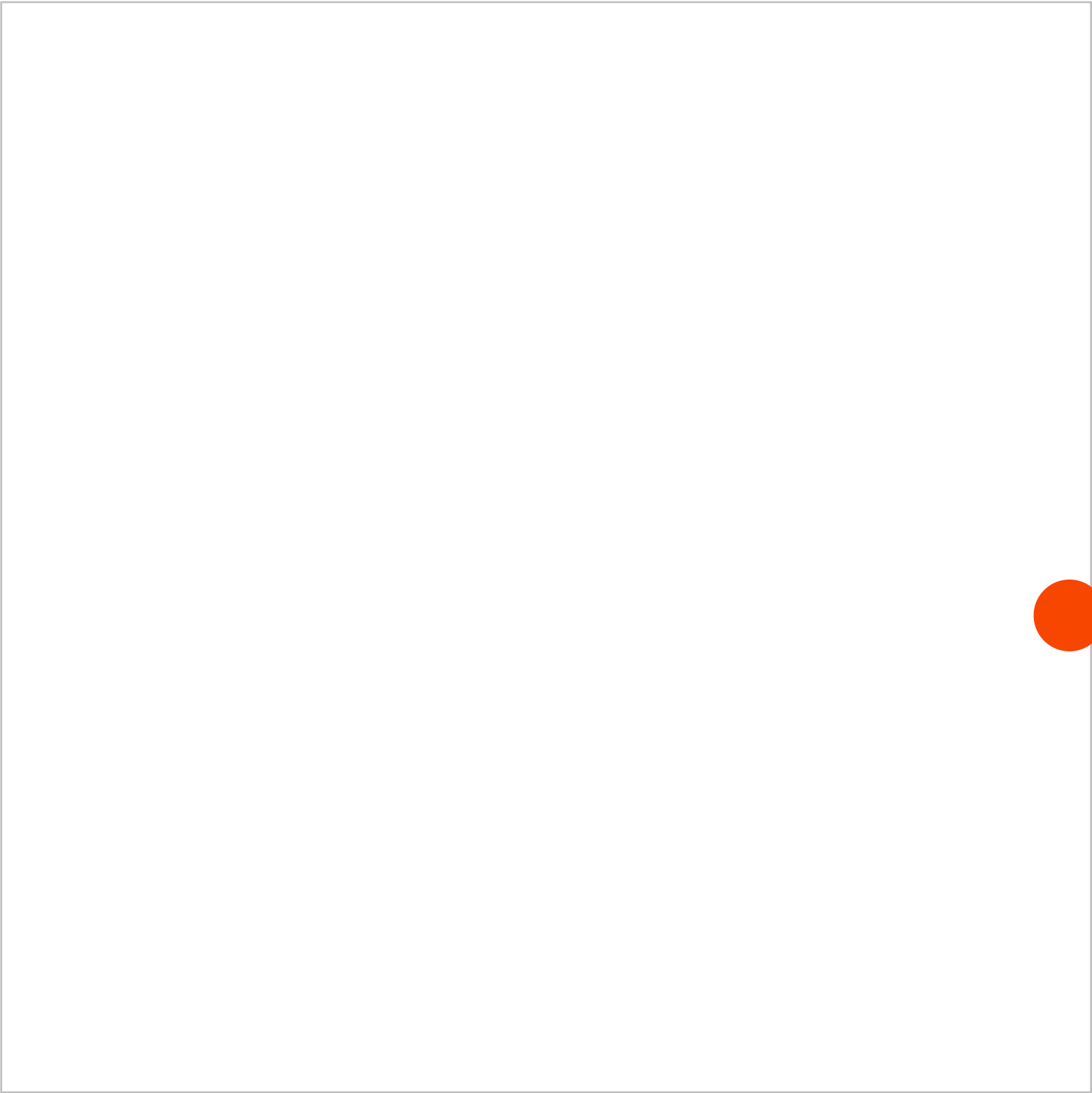


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Protestors wearing blindfolds take part in a protest in solidarity with rape victims and to oppose violence against women in Delhi.
(Photo: Reuters)

HIGHLIGHTS

- The action by the Cyberabad Police was hailed by many as the benchmark of justice for such heinous crimes
- Kin of several victims of similar cases demanded "Hyderabad-like punishment/justice" for their accused
- Now, due process of law is being looked at as a waste of time, which could be detrimental in ensuring fair judgment

Instant justice has taken a new meaning following the killing of the four accused in the Telangana doctor's rape-murder case on Friday.

The action by the Cyberabad Police was hailed by many as the benchmark of justice for such heinous crimes. Following the announcement of the news, celebrations hit the streets in Hyderabad with people showering flower petals on the police and women tying them rakhis.

However, the killing, within 10 days of the rape and murder of the Telangana doctor, triggered a lust for instant dispensation of justice, without trials. Kin of several victims of similar cases demanded "Hyderabad-like punishment/justice" for their accused.

The father of the victim in the Unnao incident demanded that the accused of his daughter is meted out the same treatment as the accused in the Hyderabad case. A similar demand has been made by the mother of another rape-murder victim in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

The reason behind the mass celebration of the shooting was the swiftness with which the accused were "brought to justice", even as Nirbhaya's rapists are yet to be hanged. Nirbhaya was brutally gang raped, with an iron rod inserted in her private parts, on December 16, 2012. Her mother expressed happiness over the killing and criticised the "snail-paced" Indian judiciary for the delay.

Following the Hyderabad killing, two incidents of mob action have already been reported from Mhow in Madhya Pradesh and Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh.

Lawyers at the Mhow court premises attempted to thrash an accused brought to the court in connection with the hearing in a rape case involving a four-year-old child in Indore district.

In Bilaspur, bystanders joined the relatives of a rape victim to grab an accused brought by the police to a court.

A video from the court premises in Mhow showed the face of the accused person being covered with a black cloth by the policemen who had surrounded him to rescue him from the clutches of the angry lawyers.

But the lawyers somehow managed to grab Ankit, the accused.

The Telangana rape victim's family had also expressed satisfaction after the news of the killing of the rape and murder accused broke. Barring a particular section, the killing was mostly celebrated. For most people, the death of the accused within 10 days of the incident was a breath of fresh air compared to a long trial which could also lead to an acquittal.

What should be noted is that the Cyberabad Police has maintained that it was an act of self-defence when the accused tried to run away during the recreation of crime at 3 am. The police claimed the accused had snatched their weapons and even fired at them.

The shooting incident garnered extreme reactions on social media. While many congratulated the police for their swift action, several pointed out how the accused were killed even before facing trial or conviction.

What indeed is a matter of concern is that following the killing of the accused in the Hyderabad matter, due process of law is being looked at as a waste of time, which could be detrimental in ensuring fair judgment.

A case in point, when a student of Ryan International School was murdered, the initial suspect was a conductor of the school bus, who had also confessed to the crime. However, upon investigation, it was found out that the real culprit was someone else.

Speaking on the incident, noted advocate Abha Singh said, "Hyderabad rape is the biggest low in the history of this country, as far as the safety of women is concerned. We did not learn from 2012, and despite our strong laws and death penalty provisions, crime has not been controlled."

"The country has been watching how the Nirbhaya rapists are still alive, despite the death penalty awarded to them in 2013. There is also a feeling amongst the victims that the justice system is more favourable for the accused than the victim, with poor conviction rates as low as 29% for rape, delay in the trial, multiple appeals, etc. Hence the cry for the lynching of rapists and show of happiness and adulation at the killing of the four accused rapists by Hyderabad Police."

Activist Tehseen Poonawalla strongly condemned the incident and said, "encounter" is not the solution. He said, "When a society seeks revenge and not justice it is an acknowledgment that our complete legal system and law and order machinery has broken down. In order to fight rape and sexual abuse against women, the entire system needs to be overhauled. Swift trials and deliverable justice act as a deterrence, not an encounter.

Supreme Court advocate Ustav Bains also spoke against the Hyderabad police action. He said, "Police Encounters is not the solution, Reforming the Criminal Justice System is. Now we will never know who really gang-raped & murdered the Hyderabad victim."

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